

011 by PaladinofFarore

Category: Marvel Cinematic Universe, Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, Future Fic

Language: English

Characters: Hawkeye (Marvel), Hulk (Marvel), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers, Natasha Romanov (Marvel), Phil Coulson, Steve Rogers, Thor (Marvel)

Relationships: Eleven/Mike Wheeler

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-12-04

Updated: 2017-12-11

Packaged: 2022-04-03 05:20:21

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 2

Words: 4,369

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

When Nick Fury showed up at Jane Wheelers door, she slammed the door in his face. Understandable. She didn't want to be involved. She was a wife, a mother of two. A social worker. She didn't need to be the one flying around fighting gods and monsters. She'd had enough of that.

So of course, when a team of weirdos gets together to stop a mischief god, she gets dragged into it. And her life gets even stranger.

The 011 tattooed on her arm had always been a painful reminder to her. A remnant of the enslavement she'd escaped.

To the world, it would be the name of one of earth's mightiest heroes.

1. Recruitment

Author's Note:

So this is an idea I've been floating for a while. Basically, what if Stranger Things was part of the MCU. Just, you know, in the eighties. I have this planned as a sometimes serialized series of one shots about El taking her place in the MCU, while also exploring her and Mikes adult family life. Leave a comment and let me know what characters you want to see El meet and interact with.

When Nick Fury first showed up on her doorstep, Jane Wheeler slammed the door in his face.

You couldn't really blame her (Fury most certainly didn't).

She didn't have the best experience with government organizations involved with the supernatural. So when a guy in a trenchcoat, an eyepatch, and a grizzled face showed up at her door she simply decided "no", and the door closed. The Shield emblem had only made her more paranoid.

It was rather rude, actually. But being a wife and mother of two had made her far more paranoid about remnants of her past or anything tangential to it creeping their way back into her life.

A few weeks later when Phil Coulson and a red headed women with eyes that positively scream of Jane's own past, she almost slams the door again.

She finds however that Phil Coulson is in many ways a far better negotiator than his boss. Or at least he's more genuinely likable.

That's how he finds himself seated beside his companion in Jane's living room nursing a cup of tea.

The woman introduced herself as Natasha Romanoff. Jane was prepared to snap her neck like a twig if need be.

“Thank you,” Coulson said, setting the cup down after a long draft. “Not enough people appreciate tea these days. All coffee drinkers.”

“What is this about?” Mike asked, voice a tone harsher than usual. He’d arrived home not long after their current guests, and he stood behind his wife like a tall brown haired guard dog.

The way he held himself, arms crossed and stance firm, shifted the eyepatch that garbed the left half of his face.

“We just wanted to ask some questions,” Coulson replied. “Answer some too. There’s lots of stories out there about you, Mrs. Wheeler. Did you really fight a giant squid?”

Jane barked a laugh.

She was always amazed how mangled some intelligence agencies view of her had become. In a way she was one of the US government's old white whales, their escaped weapon against those damn ruskies.

“It had tentacles, at least. But I’d call it more an eldritch hellbeast than a squid.”

Coulson laughed and nodded. His companion almost smiled.

“I thought they might be stretching the truth, but I just had to ask. It’s not everyday you meet the most powerful psychic in the hemisphere.”

A playful glint danced across his eye.

“And it’s not everyday I let suits into my home,” Jane said. She felt Mike squeeze her shoulder. “Why are you here, Mr. Coulson? I’d like to get this over and done with before my kids get home.”

They didn’t need to see any of this.

She and Mike had done their best over the years to keep as many of the details of the harsher goings of their youth from their children, at least until they were older.

That was becoming more and more difficult, of course, now that their own powers had come in full force alongside puberty.

Sarah could already pull something as big as a chair from across the yard, and Jamie, the sly boy, could almost read minds.

Coulson's face became more serious, though it didn't quite harden.

"Sorry. I tend to get excitable."

"He does," Romanoff agreed. "That's why they send me with him. Make sure he actually comes back."

Coulson chuckled before continuing.

"There's a lot happening in the world right now, Mrs. Wheeler. I'm sure you heard about Captain Rogers?"

They had. It had been all the news talked about for the last eight months.

Captain America, the greatest hero of the second world war, had been found alive in a block of ice.

Mike had been completely in awe of it. How could he not be, being a Jewish man whose own grandparents the good captain had helped liberate from the camps?

Jane nodded and Coulson went on.

"The world is changing. Things we used to think were fairytales and myths are showing up, and they're very, very real. And there are people out there who'd try to exploit that. The two of you know that better than most, I think."

He looked to Mike.

"You lost your eye in the Brenner incident, in '87? Forgive me for asking."

Mike grunted, adjusting the patch.

Jane shuddered.

That had been an awful, awful autumn. Her troubles always came in the fall. Carried on the backs of interdimensional monsters or the man who'd sired her into being.

"You know about that?" Mike asked.

"Kind of hard to not know about, really," said Coulson. "Most people don't know the details, but an incident of that scale? That gets noticed by people in our field."

Jane closed her eyes.

It had been junior year.

Everything had been great.

Hopper and Joyce had left for two weeks on their delayed honeymoon, with Jonathan returning home to watch his siblings.

Jane had been planning a date. Homecoming was coming up and she'd wanted to do something special, conspiring with Max to really knock Mike on his ass. Do something cool and crazy.

Then, Mike had vanished.

And within a three day span Jane had gone from planning some much needed alone time with her boyfriend to sitting in the back of a stolen car next to Kali, Nancy in the backseat with Max and a rifle, speeding towards whatever inkling The Void could tell her.

What followed was nightmarish.

She'd known it was a trap of course.

Papa had meant it as a trap.

When it was all over, the facility was in ruins. Flames licking at the wreckage.

Brenner was incapacitated but not dead.

Jane herself had stretched her powers so far that blood trickled from her eyes in dark rivulets, and Mike had lost an eye.

She still dreamed about that day sometimes.

Nightmares where Brenner's bullet hadn't been pushed aside at the last moment.

Had that happened, no one would've walked out of there alive. Least of all Jane.

"What's that got to do with anything?" Jane nearly snarled.

"It means that when great powers, new technology, people with abilities, come into the world, new threats can come with them. That's why we're getting a team together. A group of extraordinary people who, together, can fight the battles that we can't."

To punctuate his statement he removed a file folder from his jacket and placed it on the coffee table.

A stylized A marked the cover.

Leaning forward, Jane flipped it open without lifting a finger.

The papers seemed to spread themselves across the table. Mike circled the loveseat and sat beside her to get a look.

"So cool," she heard Coulson mutter.

Names and pictures cluttered the papers.

Tony Stark, Steve Rogers, Clint Barton, Bruce Banner, Romanoff herself, a dozen other names.

The name Carol Danvers caught her attention. The file labelled her as MIA more than a decade ago, unfit for the program.

"You want me to join a strike team?" she asked.

"A response team," Romanoff corrected. "Of the best we can find."

"I'm a social worker, Mr. Coulson," Jane said, flipping Tony Stark's

page over and examining the one about someone claiming to be a Norse god. “If you need help placing a child or talking to the families of deceased agents I can help you. And surely you have better candidates than a forty year old mother of two to fly around fighting battles.”

Social work what she was truly good at. Making sure that kids like her, well, sort of like her, could find the family and support that the world had decided to bestow on her for some reason.

She wasn’t superman. No matter what Mike said.

“So you can fly,” Coulson said, with a smile that was as infuriating as it was endearing.

“A bit, yeah,” she admitted. With a wave of the hand she closed the folder. She managed to get most of the papers back in order. “Only short distances.”

She’d first tried her senior year. It had resulted in a broken wrist. Eventually she’d pulled it off, lashing herself through the air, but it took the right mood. The right emotional fuel.

The first time she’d flown had been shortly after Mike had gotten down on one knee and offered her forever.

Kali had been right that anger fueled her power.

What she’d missed was that other emotions worked too.

“Look,” Mike interjected, something Jane was very, very grateful for. “We appreciate that you actually sat down to talk to us. Most government types tend to try and spy on us instead, or just show up guns blazing. But this isn’t really something we’re interested in. We have kids to worry about.”

Coulson nodded and collected his folder.

“Of course. We understand. We all have our own priorities, I can respect that. But if you change your mind, give us a call. We’d love to have you.” He placed his card on the table.

"Thanks," Jane said flatly. Unsure of what else she could say.

"It's been nice to meet you," said Romanoff, shaking her hand as they stood to go.

Jane would remember the look in the agent's eyes forever. They were a mirror of sorts. Cracked.

"Likewise," Jane said, leading them to the door. "If I find any of your boys lurking in the bushes I'll kill them myself."

To her surprise Romanoff nodded. Coulson almost smiled.

"We'll be sure to call first," he said.

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"What're you thinking?" Mike asked her as they got ready for bed later that evening.

She didn't respond at first.

She sat on the side of the bed, draped in her sky blue bathrobe.

Thought of the meeting had dominated her thoughts for the rest of the evening. She'd barely been paying attention as Sarah had told them about her day at school. Something about a dance and a crush. Was it the same girl she'd told them about before? Jane couldn't tell you. She'd barely been there.

"Sorry, sweetie," she said, breaking out of her stupor.

"It's alright."

Mike crossed the room, dressed for bed in an oversized pair of star wars patterned pajama pants and took a seat beside her. He draped his arms around her shoulders, surrounding her torso. She loved it when he held her like that.

"New kind of feds, huh?" he said lightly.

"Yeah," she agreed. "These ones shake hands."

They laughed, half morbidly.

They'd been wary of the government since they were tweens. Even after she'd taken on the name Jane Hopper and entered society properly, there were always remnants of her past, of those who wanted to capitalize on her powers, lurking somewhere.

Brenner had come back. Though he was rotting in a cell now, he'd done real damage.

Once they'd started having children Jane had become even more paranoid about what could happen.

She'd actually sobbed when, at just eighteen months old, Sarah had started making her blocks float.

What if someone came for her?

Kali had found some agent, CIA, FBI, she wasn't sure which, lurking around the bus stop when Sarah was just seven.

They hadn't killed him, though Jane had been tempted to let her sister do as she wanted with the man.

She suppressed a shudder and leaned into Mike's embrace.

"Can't believe they asked you to join a team," said Mike. He rubbed his fingers into the blades of her shoulders. "They're making their own super friends I guess."

Jane made a noise that could only be described as meh.

"I wouldn't call Tony Stark super," a rich guy with a robot suit wasn't what she'd call knight in shining armor.

"Yeah, and Steve fucking Rogers," said Mike, unable to drain the excitement from his voice.

Jane grinned, turning to look up at him.

He'd ended up very tall. Puberty had sprouted him like a weed. By the time he was eighteen he was taller than even Hopper.

Her dad hadn't liked that. He'd liked using his height to intimidate his daughters boyfriend who he'd pretended to dislike.

"Fanboy, much?" she quipped. Not unkindly.

"With Captain America? Hell yeah. Without him I wouldn't exist."

She nodded, smile fading a bit. She lifted herself up and sat in his lap.

"I wonder why they're doing it. There must be some threat they see coming."

Mike nodded.

"Upside Down?"

Jane shook her head.

"They'd have said so. And if it was that they'd have called Owens. Or Dustin."

There friend was probably the only scientist, well, non criminal scientist with any sort of experience with the Upside Down. He kept a close eye on the dimension, scanning with instruments, occasionally calling on Jane to shut any rifts that appeared naturally."

"Are you thinking about accepting?" Mike asked. There was no judgement in the question.

She nodded.

"At least hearing them out. I don't trust the government to do this by themselves. That's how disasters happen. They make things worst. I'll need to see it."

That's how the program that had robbed her of a childhood had been allowed to happen. Mike nodded. Leaning in, he kissed her temple.

"Do what you need to honey. Just come back to us."

She actually felt herself blush. Only he could make her do that, even

as she approached middle age. He'd come a long way since being that overprotective teenage boy.

"I promise."

A little more than a month later she would receive the call about Loki's machinations.

And it would be the start of a chain of events that would bring Jane "El" Hopper deep into the world of heroes. Whether she liked it or not.

In June 2012, Eli participated in the battle of New York.

In 2016 she fought in the Civil War that nearly destroyed the Avengers forever. In that fight, she'd nearly killed Tony Stark with her bare hands.

And in 2018, she was on the frontlines of the Battle of Wakanda, the first conflict in what history would call the Infinity war.

Shortly after she would watch Steve Rogers die at the hands of the mad titan.

And she'd see the universe be unmade then reforged again.

She was used to seeing strange things.

2. Meeting Steve

Summary for the Chapter:

El meets Steve Rogers. He makes a good first impression.

Notes for the Chapter:

Next chapter will be out faster. I have plans for these to be more in depth, focusing on specific character interactions, but I need to lay the groundwork first.

The call came in the early summer.

The kids had just gotten out of school, and the two Wheeler kids had wasted no time in getting down to summer activities. Jamie was playing soccer with his friends at the local park (Indianapolis had a great park system even if its roads were in perpetual disrepair) and Sarah was out with friends at the mall.

At eleven the girl had started showing her first romantic interests, and her mother had an inkling that her daughter would be quite the skirt chaser as she got older. (She'd shown less than zero interest in boys, and her childhood crushes had included every disney princess and Xena).

This sentiment would prove true in her teenage years. Her girlfriends would include a friend from school, and a space alien.

Jane was sitting in her home office finishing up the paperwork on her last case when the call came.

She liked to work from home.

When the kids were young it had let juggle both work and motherhood. She'd spent many days bouncing Sarah, and then Jamie, on her knee as she worked.

As a child she'd always longed to venture out from the confines of Hoppers roof and see the world.

As an adult, she was content to rule her own castle.

Just as she sent her last email her phone buzzed with a familiar number flashing.

“Agent Coulson,” she answered coolly. “How can I help you?”

“Mrs. Wheeler,” he sounded exhausted. “We need help finding someone. Would you be up for it?”

She paused.

“We’re going to my parents this weekend, Mr. Coulson.”

Every summer since Sarah was small they’d had the tradition of heading down to Hawkins for a weekend. Kick off the season with a barbeque at her parents house. They were planning on leaving that very evening. As soon as Mike got home and the kids came crawling back from wherever they’d ended up.

“That shouldn’t be a problem,” said Coulson. “We just need your help locating a target. We can have you there by tomorrow morning at the latest.”

Coulson was a very good liar. Or at the very least he was good at keeping calm and collected when it didn't involve fanboyism.

“What sort of target? I’d need a picture.”

Since her youth she’d fine tuned her astral projection to the point where she could find those close to her from basically anywhere. But a stranger? She still needed a reference point.

“You’ll understand that I don’t want to talk about it over the phone?”

“Of course,” she responded. Who would be monitoring them?

“Suffice to say, they’re...not nice. They’ve taken an asset of great importance. We need to retrieve it.”

“I assume if you’re calling you’ve already sent someone for me?”

“I have a car ten minutes out.”

Jane laughed.

“Give me half an hour Mr. Coulson. I’d like to at least call my husband before I go charging off into the unknown with a man I barely know.”

“Please,” he said, and Jane could hear the smile on his lips through the phone. “Call me Phil.”

“Ok Phil, I’ll see you soon.”

She spent the next twenty minutes making phone calls.

First she called Mike, who, bless him, went along with the whole thing far easier than he probably should have.

“Alright, hun,” he said. “We’ll head down to Hops tonight. Just be sure to call, ok?”

“I will. I’ll let you know what flavor of massive government facility I end up in. Hopefully better than sterile white and underground corridors.”

“Do you think they have the same contractor? I mean they are both government.”

“I guess we’ll see. I’ll take pictures if I can. Oh, and don’t give the guys the wrong idea of what I’m doing. I’m just checking it out.”

Knowing her friends they would probably blow it completely out of proportion. Conspiring wildly about what insane stuff she was off dealing with.

Though they’d grown older and found new paths in life, very little had changed since the mid 80’s They were still a bunch of losers. And they were still her boys. Max was far more realistically minded.

“I love you Mike,” she told her husband.

“Love you too, El. Always.”

Next she called her dad.

For obvious reasons he'd been less than enthusiastic about her working with a government entity like Shield. Officially they had nothing to do with the Hawkins lab, or any of the involved experiments, but such institutions were incredibly incestuous. There was bound to be some crossover somewhere.

"I don't like you doing this, you know," he grumbled.

"I know you don't dad," she said evenly. "But I'd like to get out ahead of this for once. I don't trust feds to handle this well. Got to have a look at it myself."

"Right....be careful, Ellie. I wish I could go with you."

She wished that too. Though she didn't know how well the man approaching seventy would do in a situation that may well prove to have multiple super powered individuals running about.

"Don't worry dad. I'll be there by morning at the latest. Don't start the cookout without me."

No one cooked like her parents did. Mike was a close second in her book, he'd always outstripped her in culinary talents, but no one would top Hopper and Joyce.

He chuckled.

"We won't kiddo. Unless your brats eat it all before you can get here."

Jane smiled.

"They will unless you beat them to it."

"I'll have you know I've lost weight, kid. That diet Joyce's got me on may actually be working."

"Sure it is, dad. I love you, see ya soon."

"Love you kid."

She disconnects the call and sighs.

The sleek black car pulled into the driveway and she stepped outside.

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When she first meets Steve Rogers, it's a very strange feeling.

After she'd been picked up by the sleek black Shield car, she'd been quickly shepherd onto a quinjet, a huge but somehow still swift plane that served as one of the primary transports for Shield personnel.

Apparently the jet had already made a stop en route to get her, so when she stepped inside she found herself face to face with somehow literally out of her high school history books.

He was dressed old fashionedly. Dark leather jacket. Plaid shirt and form fitting jeans.

He looked up at her when she sat down. There was a sadness in those blue eyes that made Janes heart ache.

"Jane Wheeler?" he asked, rising to shake her hand shortly after they took off.

"That's me," she said, accepting his hand.

She'll remember this moment years from now, when she watches him bleed out.

"You must be Steve Rogers." He smiles. A pain twinging at his lips. "I have to say, I prefer your reaction to the ones I've been getting."

"Which are?" she had a pretty good idea.

He shrugged. Jane was charmed, and surprised, to see the awkwardness in his movements. She was reminded suddenly of Mike and Will. That nervous twitch of the shoulders. In that moment he looked less like a legend and more like a young man with no idea what he was doing.

"Awe. Surprise. Admiration," he scratched the back of his neck.

“Just....lots of stuff like that. I don’t deserve that.”

It was then that Jane new that she liked the man. Steve Rogers. Not the shield slinging hero the world would know him as.

“You seem like a nice guy Mr. Rogers. No reason to give anyone attention they don’t want. Trust me, I know.”

She was very grateful Mike wasn’t there with her for that reason. He was sweet, always had been. But he had the habit of going on and on about things he liked. Much as she loved Dungeons and Dragons she probably knew more about the lore than was anyway reasonable.

Steve nodded appreciatively.

“They brought you on to help find the cube?” he asked, switching tones to business.

She nodded.

“Any idea what it is?” she’d looked over the files, but it hadn’t provided any real information on the thing.

“It’s dangerous,” Steve replied. “It’s a power source of some kind.Saw it used to make an arsenal that nearly destroyed...everything. You can find it for us?”

“I can probably find the person who has it. Objects, I can do those sometimes but people are easier.”

“Because they have a mind? Because you’re a psychic?” She was surprised by how inquisitive he was. Most never really asked how powers functioned.

“Sort of. Objects have less of a presence. People, and some animals, give off more of a signal, I guess you’d call it.”

He nodded, understanding.

“Good to have you on board, Mrs. Wheeler. Hopefully with your help we can end this quickly.”

In his eyes she could tell he didn't really want to fight. That he wanted this over and done with.

"Please," she said. "Call me El. My friends all call me El."

She knew already that they would be friends. Or close to it at least.

Before too long her phone contacts would have two Steves.

Hair Steve and Cap Steve.

He lifted an eyebrow.

"El?"

"It's a long story. I'll tell you sometime. Short version, it's been my nickname ever since I was a kid."

Before he can reply the door to the cockpit opens and Phil Coulson enters. Hands in his pockets.

"Mrs. Wheeler," he greets. "Captain Rogers. Good to have you on board. If you come this way I have some things you may like to see."

They rise and El takes note of the sketch pad Cap leaves on the bench. She'll ask him about it later. Beneath it is some sort of graphic novel he'd been reading.

What Coulson wants to show them is a side bay containing the agents most recent assignments.

Suits.

The new Captain America suit is quite a departure from the one El had seen in old pictures though it kept the same spirit. More solid blue, fewer overt ammo pouches. He seems to be skeptical of the idea of stepping into battle again, but its clear he appreciates the gesture.

El feels her mouth drop open in shock when Coulson opens another panel in the wall to show of another suit.

"You...you made me one?"

He smiled as it was the most obvious thing in the world.

“Of course. You’ve seen combat before, haven’t you?”

‘Combat’ isn’t the word she’d use for her forays into physical conflict.

She’d fought monsters from another dimension and slaughtered foot soldiers with the efficiency of an elephant stomping on ants.

“I have, but this is still a little much.”

The suit was something to behold.

It consisted of a black armored bodysuit. Not the skintight kind that Natasha wore, but a slightly bulkier model. Covering the entire body, it also had a series of quick release knives in the forearms triggered by a small lever on the inside. Only activatable by telekinesis.

The outer layer was a slick tan trenchcoat that ran tight against her form. It would surround her, but when tied properly it wouldn’t flap behind her.

The final piece was a mask that covered the top of her head.

Bright orange lenses filled the eye sockets, giving it the appearance of an insectoid head.

“You’ve been talking to Dustin, haven’t you?”

Coulson shrugged in a way that he probably thought was coy.

“I did my homework.”

The lenses were crafted of a special plasticine material that Dustin had helped create. It was resistant to psionic energy, and in theory, would keep her eyes from bleeding were she to push things to hard.

“Well...thank you.”

“You can do your own logo, if you want,” the agent suggested. El rolled her eyes.

A logo?

What was she, twelve?

She would have a logo of course. But it would be spur of the moment and very, very last minute.